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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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EXAMINER

BROWN, DREW J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3616

DATE MAILED: 02/15/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/631,140	Applicant(s) ENDERS ET AL.	
	Examiner Drew J. Brown	Art Unit 3616	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 15 December 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 3-9, 16-18, 20-26, 33-35, 37-43 and 50-60 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 3-9, 16-18, 20-26, 33-35, 37-43, and 50-60 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

The office action is a response to the amendment filed on 12/15/05. Claims 1, 3, 8, 18, 20, 25, 35, 37, and 42 have been amended and claims 2, 10-15, 19, 27-32, 36, and 44-49 have been canceled. New claims 52-60 have been added.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

2. Claims 1, 3, 8, 16, 18, 20, 25, 33, 52, and 55 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Lebaudy et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,543,801 B2).

Lebaudy et al. discloses an airbag for preventing the lower body portion of a vehicle occupant (column 3, lines 5-7) from being propelled during a collision, which comprises a front panel 21 attached to a back panel 10 that are formed of sheet metal (column 4, line 1) and form an inflatable chamber for receiving inflation fluid. The adapter unit 2, integrally formed as one piece with the back panel, comprises an impression with a first end portion configured to receive the diffuser portion of the inflator 3. The adapter unit also comprises an orifice 9 formed in the back panel. The examiner considered the term “integral” to be defined to embrace constructions united by such means as fastening and welding (In re Hotte (CCPA) 177 USPQ 326).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

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(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 35, 37, 42, 50, and 58 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lebaudy et al. in view of Schneider (U.S. Pat. No. 5,630,621).

Lebaudy et al. discloses the claimed invention as discussed above but does not disclose that a decorative trim panel is attached to the first of two sides of the front panel, and the second side of the front panel is attached to the back panel. Schneider et al. does disclose the decorative trim panel (column 2, lines 35-38). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Lebaudy et al. in view of the teachings of Schneider to attach a decorative trim panel to the front panel so the outer surface of the airbag would match the interior of the vehicle.

5. Claims 1, 3-5, 7, 8, 16-18, 20-22, 24, 25, 33-35, 37-39, 41, 42, and 50-60 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nelson et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,848,715 B2) in view of Schwark et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,854,759 B2).

The applied reference has a common assignee with the instant application. Based upon the earlier effective U.S. filing date of the reference, it constitutes prior art only under 35 U.S.C. 102(e). This rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) might be overcome by: (1) a showing under 37 CFR 1.132 that any invention disclosed but not claimed in the reference was derived from the inventor of this application and is thus not an invention "by another"; (2) a showing of a date of invention for the claimed subject matter of the application which corresponds to subject matter disclosed but not claimed in the reference, prior to the effective U.S. filing date of the reference under 37 CFR 1.131; or (3) an oath or declaration under 37 CFR 1.130 stating that the application and reference are currently owned by the same party and that the inventor named in the application is the prior inventor under 35 U.S.C. 104, together with a terminal disclaimer in accordance with 37 CFR 1.321(c). This rejection might also be overcome by showing that the

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reference is disqualified under 35 U.S.C. 103(c) as prior art in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). See MPEP § 706.02(l)(1) and § 706.02(l)(2).

Nelson et al. discloses an airbag for preventing the lower body portion of a vehicle occupant from being propelled during a collision, which comprises rigid sheet metal (column 5, lines 52-55) front 132 and back 130 panels. A decorative trim panel 134 is attached to the first of two sides of the front panel, and the second side of the front panel is attached to the back panel to form an inflatable chamber for receiving inflation fluid. An adapter unit 138 is in communication with the back panel and is securely attachable to a diffuser portion 247 of the inflator 136.

Nelson et al. does not disclose an adapter unit that is integrally formed as one piece with the back panel. Nelson et al. also does not disclose that the front and back panels can be made of a plastic material. Schwark et al. does disclose an adapter unit 80 that is integrally formed as one piece with the back panel. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Nelson et al. in view of the teachings of Schwark et al. to integrate the adapter with the back panel in order to lower the cost of production since separate components would not be needed.

Schwark also discloses that the adapter unit also comprises an impression with a first end portion configured to receive the inflator 18. Since the entire inflator is disposed within the impression, the diffuser portion of the inflator is also disposed within the impression. The first end portion has an orifice 86 where the diameter is larger than the diameter of the inflator. There is a sealing wedge 114 disposed between the inflator and the first end portion (column 4, lines 30-33), and a connector stud fastener 112 is attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator, wherein the impression further comprises a second end portion configured to receive the fastener in a small orifice 100. Schwark further discloses that the front panel 120 can be formed of a plastic material (column 4, lines 40-42). It would also have been obvious to make the back panel 60 out of plastic in order to stay consistent with the front panel.

6. Claims 4, 5, 7, 17, 21, 22, 24, 34, 53, 54, 56, and 57 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lebaudy et al. in view of Schwark et al.

Lebaudy et al. discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not disclose that the first end portion has an orifice where the diameter is larger than the diameter of the inflator. Lebaudy et al. also does not disclose that there is a sealing wedge between the inflator and the first end portion and that both the front and back panels can be made of a plastic material. Finally, Lebaudy et al. does not disclose that a fastener is attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator, and wherein the impression further comprises a second end portion configured to receive the fastener.

However, Schwark et al. does disclose that the first end portion has an orifice 86 where the diameter is larger than the diameter of the inflator. There is a sealing wedge disposed between the fill valve 114 of the inflator and the first end portion (column 4, lines 30-33), and the front panel 120 is a plastic material. Also, a connector stud fastener 112 is attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator, wherein the impression further comprises a second end portion configured to receive the fastener in a small orifice 100.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have the diameter of the orifice be larger than that of the inflator so the inflator can fit inside of the orifice. It would have been obvious to have a sealing wedge so the gas cannot escape when passing between the inflator and the first end portion. Since the front panel is made of a plastic material, it would have been obvious to form the back panel 60 of plastic in order to stay consistent with the front panel. Also, it would have been obvious to have a fastener attached to the diffuser and a second end portion to receive the fastener so the diffuser could be secured during inflation.

7. Claims 38, 39, 41, 51, 59, and 60 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lebaudy et al. in view of Schneider and Schwark et al.

Lebaudy et al., as modified by Schneider, discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not disclose that the first end portion has an orifice where the diameter is larger than the diameter of the inflator. Lebaudy et al. also does not disclose that there is a sealing wedge between the inflator and the first end portion and that both the front and back panels can be made of a plastic material. Finally, Lebaudy et al. does not disclose that a fastener is attached to the

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diffuser portion of the inflator, and wherein the impression further comprises a second end portion configured to receive the fastener.

However, Schwark et al. does disclose that the first end portion has an orifice 86 where the diameter is larger than the diameter of the inflator. There is a sealing wedge disposed between the fill valve 114 of the inflator and the first end portion (column 4, lines 30-33), and the front panel 120 is a plastic material. Also, a connector stud fastener 112 is attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator, wherein the impression further comprises a second end portion configured to receive the fastener in a small orifice 100.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have the diameter of the orifice be larger than that of the inflator so the inflator can fit inside of the orifice. It would have been obvious to have a sealing wedge so the gas cannot escape when passing between the inflator and the first end portion. Since the front panel is made of a plastic material, it would have been obvious to form the back panel 60 of plastic in order to stay consistent with the front panel. Also, it would have been obvious to have a fastener attached to the diffuser and a second end portion to receive the fastener so the diffuser could be secured during inflation.

8. Claims 1, 3-5, 7, 8, 17, 18, 20-22, 24, 25, 34, 35, 37-39, 41, 42, 51, 53, 54, 56, 57, 59, and 60 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schneider (U.S. Pat. No. 5,630,621) in view of Schwark et al.

Schneider discloses an airbag for preventing the lower body portion of a vehicle occupant from being propelled during a collision, which comprises rigid front 40 and back 14 panels. A decorative trim panel 134 is attached to the first of two sides of the front panel (column 2, lines 35-38), and the second side of the front panel is attached to the back panel to form an inflatable chamber for receiving inflation fluid. An adapter unit 20 is in communication with the back panel and is securely attachable to a diffuser portion of the inflator 10.

Schneider does not disclose an adapter unit that is integrally formed as one piece with the back panel. However, Schwark et al. does disclose that the adapter unit is integrally formed as one piece with the back panel. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Schneider in view

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of the teachings of Schwark et al. to integrate the adapter with the back panel in order to lower the cost of production since separate components would not be needed.

Schwark also discloses that the adapter unit also comprises an impression with a first end portion configured to receive the inflator 18. Since the entire inflator is disposed within the impression, the diffuser portion of the inflator is also disposed within the impression. The first end portion has an orifice 86 where the diameter is larger than the diameter of the inflator. There is a sealing wedge 114 disposed between the inflator and the first end portion (column 4, lines 30-33), and a connector stud fastener 112 is attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator, wherein the impression further comprises a second end portion configured to receive the fastener in a small orifice 100. Schwark further discloses that the front panel 120 can be formed of a plastic material (column 4, lines 40-42). It would also have been obvious to make the back panel 60 out of plastic in order to stay consistent with the front panel.

9. Claims 6 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lebaudy et al. in view of Edwards, II et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,749,219 B2).

Lebaudy et al. discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not disclose that the first end portion comprises an orifice having a first diameter that is smaller than or equal to the diameter of the inflator, wherein the adapter unit is securely attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator through a press fit.

Edwards, II et al. does disclose that the first end portion has a smaller diameter and that the adapter unit is attached securely to it through a press fit (column 1, line 60-62).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Lebaudy et al. to utilize a snap fit as taught by Edwards, II et al. in order to eliminate the need for other fasteners and also to increase the strength of the attachment by having two walls overlap.

10. Claim 40 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lebaudy et al. in view of Schneider and Edwards, II et al.

Lebaudy et al., as modified by Schneider, discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not disclose that the first end portion comprises an orifice having a first diameter that is

smaller than or equal to the diameter of the inflator, wherein the adapter unit is securely attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator through a press fit.

Edwards, II et al. does disclose that the first end portion has a smaller diameter and that the adapter unit is attached securely to it through a press fit (column 1, line 60-62).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify the invention of Lebaudy et al. to utilize a snap fit as taught by Edwards, II et al. in order to eliminate the need for other fasteners and also to increase the strength of the attachment by having two walls overlap.

11. Claims 6, 23, and 40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nelson et al. in view of Schwark et al. and Edwards, II et al.

Nelson et al., as modified by Schwark et al., discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not disclose that the first end portion comprises an orifice having a first diameter that is smaller than or equal to the diameter of the inflator, wherein the adapter unit is securely attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator through a press fit.

Edwards, II et al. does disclose that the first end portion has a smaller diameter and that the adapter unit is attached securely to it through a press fit (column 1, line 60-62).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify the invention of Nelson et al. to utilize a snap fit as taught by Edwards, II et al. in order to eliminate the need for other fasteners and also to increase the strength of the attachment by having two walls overlap.

12. Claims 6, 23, and 40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schneider in view of Schwark et al. and Edwards, II et al.

Schneider, as modified by Schwark et al., discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not disclose that the first end portion comprises an orifice having a first diameter that is smaller than or equal to the diameter of the inflator, wherein the adapter unit is securely attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator through a press fit.

Edwards, II et al. does disclose that the first end portion has a smaller diameter and that the adapter unit is attached securely to it through a press fit (column 1, line 60-62).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify the invention of Schneider to utilize a snap fit as taught by Edwards, II et al. in order to eliminate the need for other fasteners and also to increase the strength of the attachment by having two walls overlap.

13. Claims 9 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lebaudy et al. in view of Ozaki et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,676,147 B2).

Lebaudy et al. discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not disclose that the back panel further comprises a lip portion encompassing the orifice, which is configured to prevent the diffuser portion of the inflator from becoming separated from the adapter unit during discharge of the inflator.

Ozaki et al. does disclose a lip portion (portion of 64 that is engaged with part 28) encompassing the orifice and configured to secure the diffuser portion of the inflator during discharge.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Lebaudy et al. use a lip as taught by Ozaki et al. so that a separate component would not be needed to restrain the inflator during discharge; instead, the lip can be an integral part of the adapter.

14. Claim 43 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lebaudy et al. in view of Schneider and Ozaki et al.

Lebaudy et al., as modified by Schneider, discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not disclose that the back panel further comprises a lip portion encompassing the orifice, which is configured to prevent the diffuser portion of the inflator from becoming separated from the adapter unit during discharge of the inflator.

Ozaki et al. does disclose the lip portion (portion of 64 that is engaged with part 28) encompassing the orifice and configured to secure the diffuser portion of the inflator during discharge.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify Lebaudy et al. use a lip as taught by Ozaki et al. so that

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a separate component would not be needed to restrain the inflator during discharge; instead, the lip can be an integral part of the adapter.

15. Claims 9, 26, and 43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nelson et al. in view of Schwark et al. and Ozaki et al.

Nelson et al., as modified by Schwark et al., discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not disclose that the back panel further comprises a lip portion encompassing the orifice, which is configured to prevent the diffuser portion of the inflator from becoming separated from the adapter unit during discharge of the inflator.

Ozaki et al. does disclose the lip portion (portion of 64 that is engaged with part 28) encompassing the orifice and configured to secure the diffuser portion of the inflator during discharge.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify Nelson as taught by Ozaki et al. to use a lip so that a separate component would not be needed to restrain the inflator during discharge; instead, the lip can be an integral part of the adapter.

16. Claims 9, 26, and 43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schneider in view of Schwark et al. and Ozaki et al.

Schneider, as modified by Schwark et al., discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not disclose that the back panel further comprises a lip portion encompassing the orifice, which is configured to prevent the diffuser portion of the inflator from becoming separated from the adapter unit during discharge of the inflator.

Ozaki et al. does disclose the lip portion (portion of 64 that is engaged with part 28) encompassing the orifice and configured to secure the diffuser portion of the inflator during discharge.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify Schneider as taught by Ozaki et al. to use a lip so that a separate component would not be needed to restrain the inflator during discharge; instead, the lip can be an integral part of the adapter.

Response to Arguments

17. Applicant's arguments filed 12/15/05 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.
18. In response to applicant's arguments against the references individually on pages 13 and 14, one cannot show nonobviousness by attacking references individually where the rejections are based on combinations of references. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981); *In re Merck & Co.*, 800 F.2d 1091, 231 USPQ 375 (Fed. Cir. 1986).
19. With response to the argument on page 12 that Lebaudy does not disclose an adapter unit integrally formed as one piece with the back panel, the Examiner maintains the rejection proper because the adapter unit is integrally formed as one piece with the back panel after welding.
20. With response to the argument that Schwark et al. does not disclose a back panel integrally formed as one piece with an adapter unit and attached to a front panel to form an inflatable chamber for receiving inflation fluid, the Examiner maintains that the rejection is proper because Nelson et al. is relied upon to teach an inflatable chamber for receiving inflation fluid, and Schwark et al. is relied upon to teach that it is integrally formed as one piece. Also, Schneider and Lebaudy also teach that the back panel is attached to the front panel to form an inflatable chamber for receiving inflation fluid.
21. With response to the argument on page 14 that neither Nelson et al. nor Schwark et al. include an impression, the Examiner maintains that the rejection is proper because Schwark et al. does include an impression (outer surface of adapter unit 80).
22. With response to the argument on page 15 that Schwark et al. does not teach an orifice where the diameter is larger than the diameter of the inflator, the Examiner maintains that the rejection is proper because the reaction plate 60 does have an orifice, which is enclosed by the cavity in the reaction plate, and this orifice is larger than the inflator as the inflator fits inside the orifice.
23. With response to the argument that Schwark et al. does not teach a sealing wedge disposed between the inflator and the first end portion configured to receive the inflator, the Examiner maintains that the rejection is proper because the outside of the valve 114 wedges and

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seals air flow between the inflator 18 and the first end portion of the adapter 80. In other words, the Examiner is relying on element 114 as a sealing wedge.

24. With response to the argument that Edwards does not disclose that the adapter unit is securely attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator through a press fit, the Examiner maintains that the rejection is proper because Edwards does show a press fit; the fact that Edwards further includes a laser weld does not nullify the fact that a press fit is indeed used.

25. With response to the argument that Ozaki et al. does not teach a lip portion encompassing the orifice, configured to prevent the diffuser portion of the inflator from becoming separated from the adapter unit during discharge of the inflator, the Examiner maintains that the rejection is proper because the lip portion (portion of 64 that is engaged with part 28) of Ozaki et al. engages the inflator and is secured during inflation by nut 30 on bolt 17.

Conclusion

26. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Drew J. Brown whose telephone number is 571-272-1362. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m..


If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Paul N. Dickson can be reached on 571-272-6669. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Drew J. Brown
Examiner
Art Unit 3616

DJB
2/8/07



DAVID R. DUNN
PRIMARY EXAMINER